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ABSTRACT

This book for beginning readers tells the story of five South Africans who, though not very famous, all did things that no black South African had ever done before. They include: Simon Mkhize who, year after year, ran the Comrades Marathon unofficially, ignoring its racial bans; Magema M. Fuze, who was the first black South African to publish a book in Zulu; Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya, who was the first black woman to become a qualified social worker; K.E. Masinga, who became the first black radio announcer; and Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize, who was one of the first people to champion women's rights in South Africa, as well as one of the first black women in Natal, South Africa, to have her own business. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (SM)

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Against the Wind
Five South Africans Follow Their Dreams

Lesley Lewis

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Against the Wind

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Against the wind

Five South Africans follow their dreams

Lesley Lewis

NEW READERS PROJECT

About this book

This book is about five South Africans: Magema Fuze; Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya; K.E. Masinga; Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize and Simon Mkhize. None of them is very famous, but they all did things that no black South African had done before. It was not easy for them to do the things they did. That is why I have called this book 'Against the wind'.

It was very interesting to find out about their lives. There is a library in Durban called the Killie Campbell Africana Library. In this library is lots of information about many different South Africans. There are also tape recordings of conversations with different people, including two tape recordings of long conversations with Bertha Mkhize. This library also has many old letters and old newspaper articles. I was very pleased to find old letters written by Magema Fuze, and to find old newpaper articles about K.E. Masinga and about Sibusisiwe Makhanya.

Thanks

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Magema M. Fuze

Magema, son of Magwaza Fuze of the Ngcobo people, was born in Zululand in about 1840. Just over eighty years later, he became the first Zulu writer to publish a book in Zulu . This book is called 'Abantu Abamnyama'. The book is now also in English and is called 'The Black People and whence they came'.

He had a friend called Mr M.J.V. Masuku. With "large teardrops" in his eyes, Mr Masuku begged Magema to write the book. Magema later said that he agreed to write the book, "In order that our children might know where we came from." He did this even though he was very weak and almost eighty.

In his book he talks about where black people come from and about Zulu customs. Most of the book is about Zulu history. He talks about the Zulu kings and their lives. He talks about how the British people took over Zululand, and about all the fighting that happened after that when the British people divided up Zululand.

Magema Fuze

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When Magema was a small boy, he spoke many times about a man who would come from across the sea, and who would be his teacher. He said that this man would call him 'Skelemu'. His mother and father looked at their small child playing with his toy carts and stones and aloe leaves, and did not understand what he was saying. But soon people began to call him Skelemu.

Then one day, when Magema was still a small boy, Bishop Colenso arrived in Natal from England. He wrote to all the chiefs, and he said that all children who were beginning to lose their first teeth should be gathered together and educated at his school. Many of the chiefs did not trust Bishop Colenso, but Skelemu's father said that this must be the man Skelemu often spoke about, and Skelemu must go to him.

So Skelemu went to school at Ekukhanyeni, which was the place where Bishop Colenso lived. Bishop Colenso was called Sobantu by all those people who knew him. A few years later, while Skelemu was still living at Ekukhanyeni, he learnt how to print books on Bishop Colenso's

printing press. He was one of the first black people in South Africa to learn this skill.

Skelemu was baptised by Bishop Colenso when he was about twenty years old. That is when he changed his name to Magema, and so he was no longer to be called Skelemu. But he did not let Christianity separate him from his people. He stayed closely in touch with Zulu culture and customs all his life.

He continued to live at Ekukhanyeni. In 1878, just before Isandhlwana, when the British people invaded Zululand, he went to visit King Cetshwayo to deliver a message from Bishop Colenso. At last he and his friends arrived at Ezinhlendleni, which was the name of the place where the King lived. They stayed for ten days.

Magema saw the king and spoke to him two days after he arrived. Magema said that the king was very handsome and kind and worried about his people. He wrote in his book that King Cetshwayo was "good and kind and loved by all his people." He also said, "I first heard from the king on that day that the white people were about to invade Zululand."

King Cetshwayo ordered two of his men to travel back to Natal with Magema and his friends to make sure they arrived back home safely. He also wanted his men to pay his respects to Bishop Colenso. King Cetshwayo gave Magema and the other men food for the journey. On their way home they stopped at Magema's father's home at Mahlaba. They gave his mother two sheep from the King, and rested for a few days.

About ten years later, after the war and after King Cetshwayo had died, Magema went to stay in Eshowe. King Cetshwayo's brothers and his son, Prince Dinuzulu, were in jail there. They were put in jail by the Government. Magema stayed in Eshowe so that he could teach Prince Dinuzulu reading and writing.

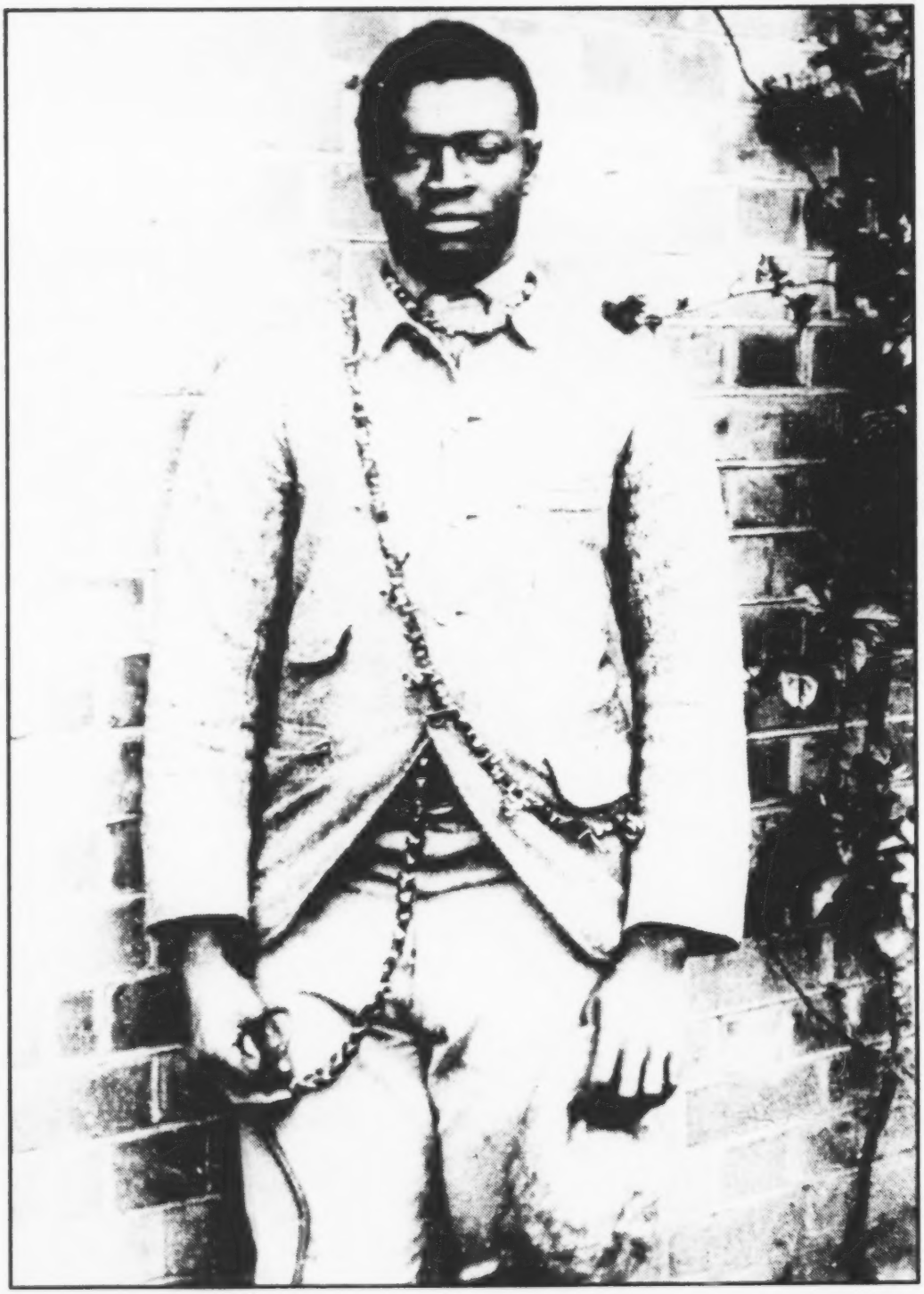
In January 1890 Prince Dinuzulu and his uncles heard that the Government wanted to send them to the island called St. Helena. "Wo!," wrote Magema, "there was confusion among us, speaking in low voices about that." Magema wrote to Manzekofi (Harry Escombe — their lawyer) telling him about where Prince Dinuzulu and his uncles were going.

So Prince Dinuzulu and his uncles went to St. Helena, and Magema went back to Pietermaritzburg. He worked at St. Alban's College, teaching the pupils about printing. Six years later, Prince Dinuzulu sent him a message to come to the island of St. Helena to teach his five children.

He went there and found that Prince Dinuzulu and his family were not kept in a jail on St. Helena. The Governor of the island had parties and invited Prince Dinuzulu and his wives. Prince Dinuzulu also had parties with dancing and lots to eat. But he was not allowed to leave the island.

While Magema was on the island, he wrote a few very angry letters to the Governor of St. Helena and to the Commissioner for Zululand in Eshowe. He was angry because someone was opening his letters and reading them before he got them. This always happened if a letter came from Bishop Colenso's daughter, Harriette, whom he called Dlwedlwe. He called her Dlwedlwe because she was thin and tall like a stick.

One night on St Helena, Magema fell down a high cliff and broke his ankle. He wrote, "The cliff is



Prince Dinuzulu

very high, and I think that by the time I reached the bottom, I was long since unconscious. When I recovered consciousness and tried to get up, I was unable to do so, and I wondered what had happened to me. After a long time I made a great effort to get up. Wo! It was not possible because the bone was broken, the foot lying sideways to the ankle! Well! What was I to do seeing that it was so late and also dark?"

Luckily, he soon heard people talking at the top of the cliff, so he shouted, "Hello!"
They shouted, "Who are you?"
Magema replied, "I am a dead man."
They were two soldiers and they quickly went to get help.

Prince Dinuzulu tried to get permission for Magema to come to his house to be cared for by his doctor. When the prince didn't get permission, he just came to the hospital and took Magema away.

About nine months later Harriette arrived at St. Helena. She had struggled for many years to get permission for Prince Dinuzulu to return home. Now she had the permission and they all left on

the ship, the S.S. Umbilo, on the day before Christmas. They arrived back home early in January 1898.

Magema and Harriet stayed close friends until he died. It is not clear exactly how old he was when he died. In 1922, when he must have been about eighty-two years old and very weak, he wrote,

"I will be happy if the one above will allow me to proceed with my work in spite of my present frailty which makes me realise when I walk that the times have advanced! How is it that my knees are so rickety when I walk!"

He did finish his book, and that same year it was published.

At the beginning of his book, he wrote these words,

"It is I who record this for you,
One of you who loves you."

Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya

Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya was born in 1894 at Mbumbulu. She became the first black social worker in South Africa.

Her father first worked as a labourer on Durban docks. When she was born, he was a farmer growing vegetables and mealies for the market. Sibusisiwe lived in a thatched hut, collected water from the river and enjoyed playing with her clay dolls. When she was nine, she went to Inanda Seminary. She was nearly asked to leave the school, because she was not quiet and well-behaved. Later she became a teacher at Inanda Seminary.

In the early 1920s, Sibusisiwe and Bertha Mkhize started an organisation called the Bantu Purity League. Bertha Mkhize said, "We talked to the girls and told them that a girl is just like an egg. Once a girl gets '*pahla*' she's '*pahla*'." (When she's broken, she's broken.) After teaching at Inanda for eight years, Sibusisiwe left teaching to work full time for the Bantu Purity League.

She travelled through Natal, Zululand and parts of the Transvaal to help young branch groups of the organisation. She gave talks on hygiene and better homes and gardens.

In 1927 she was given a scholarship to train as a social worker in America. After one year in America, it was time for her to return to South Africa. But she wasn't ready to go home yet. She felt that she still had not learnt the things she needed to learn. She wanted to go to a college where people talked about the problems in rural areas.

So she went to another college for a year to study Social Work. She had to scrub floors to pay for her food. Then she began to give talks at churches. She used the money she got from this to spend one more year studying, this time in New York. She learnt a lot while in New York, and had a lot of fun with the many good friends she made. But she didn't forget her friends at home. The whole time she was in America she sent money to the ICU (the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) which was a big trade union in South Africa at that time.

Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya when she was in America.

After three years in America, she returned to Mbumbulu in February 1930. At Mbumbulu there was a mixture of people. Some were Christians and some were not, but it didn't worry anybody. Sibusisiwe's parents were Christian, but they still kept many of the old Zulu traditions. When she returned to Mbumbulu, she started the Bantu Youth League. Some of the things she tried to do were to try to get youth leaders to work together, and to get people of different races to come together and understand each other.

At Mbumbulu she also started a social centre and school. Her father and some herdboys helped her build a small wattle and mud schoolroom with a thatched roof. Her mother helped her plant a vegetable garden with extra vegetables for food for the herdboys when they came for their lessons. Sibusisiwe also used the garden to show people how to grow vegetables. They built another little house to be the meeting place for the Bantu Youth League. It was also used for a Sunday School and a meeting place for inter-racial groups.

So Sibusiswe started a night school for herdboys, a winter school for girls and women and a Sunday

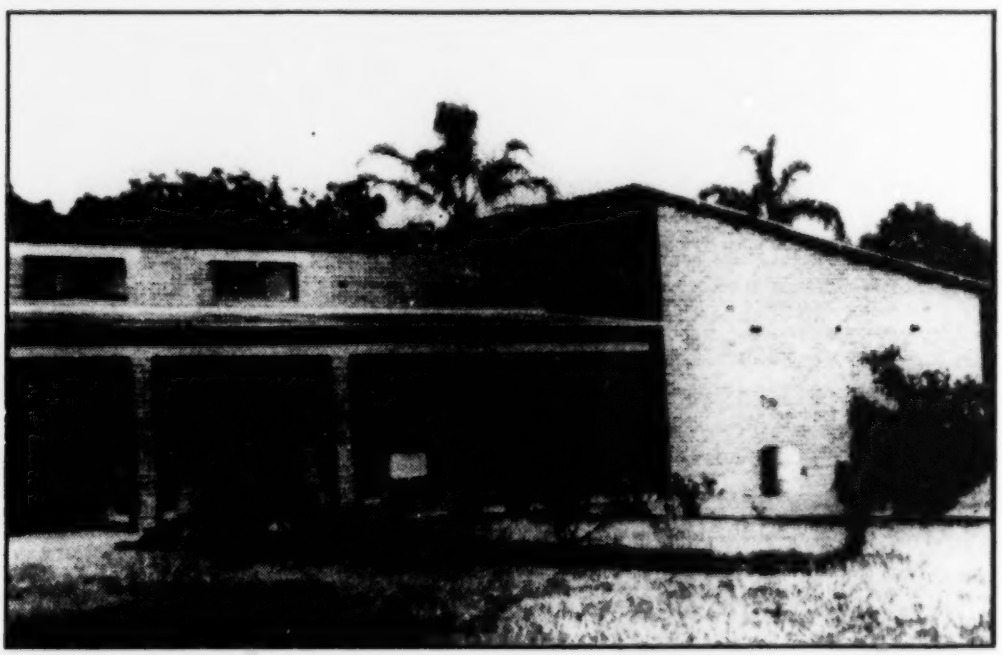
school. She also organised a very big meeting every year for community leaders.

Sometimes people wrote about Sibusisiwe's Community Centre in the newspapers. One person told how the herdboys came for their classes after herding cattle all day. The classes lasted for two hours every night during the week. "From 5pm onwards young herdboys may be found playing football on the field in front of her house, and at 8.30pm, when lessons are over, they line up in the lamplight to receive their supper on the back *stoep* of the Centre."

One of the teachers at the night school for herdboys told a newspaper, "They did their school work crowded round the only three old pressure lamps in the school. They were put to sleep in a set of huts, because it was too far for them to walk home, and there were no buses or other means of transport. They returned to work the next morning at five o'clock."

Later, Sibusisiwe also organised adult education classes, and ran a small library and clinic at Mbumbulu.

Sibusisiwe's house at Mbumbulu



The Community Centre at Mbumbulu

When the Community Centre needed a schoolhouse, Sibusisiwe asked friends for gifts of cement. She set aside a certain day and called it Cement Sunday. On that day, gifts for the schoolhouse fund were collected.

In 1953, a woman called Lucy Johnston left the Community Centre a lot of money when she died — about 5000 pounds. This made it possible to build the classrooms and a large hall.

Sibusisiwe also started brewing and selling *utshwala* at Mbumbulu when she returned from America. Her *bhuti*, H.M.S. Makhanya, spoke about how she didn't see anything wrong with beerbrewing. "When she came back, drinking was nothing, and she sold beer herself. She started a beerhall here, not far away from her place . . . churches overseas don't ban alcoholic drinks."

Sibusisiwe decided not to marry.
H.M.S. Makhanya said she didn't get married because she was so outspoken, and this made the young men frightened of her.

"I know why she didn't get married," he said. "You know amongst our people a woman has got

to be very nice and humble. She wasn't. She was so outspoken. She would come here and talk to men and women as she would to her friends, and the young men regarded her with fear. They would say, 'I can't live with such a woman — she's a boss to me.' "

Her friend Bertha Mkhize said she didn't get married because "she was always busy. She was always thinking of what to do, and helping the people to lead a better life".

Sibusisiwe died in 1971. Before she died she said, "More cultural and social centres are required. Living apart often creates jealousy, suspicion and lethargy. By coming together the people would learn to work as teams to better their conditions."

utshwala - traditional beer
bhuti - kinsman, in this case, her father's cousin
stoep - verandah

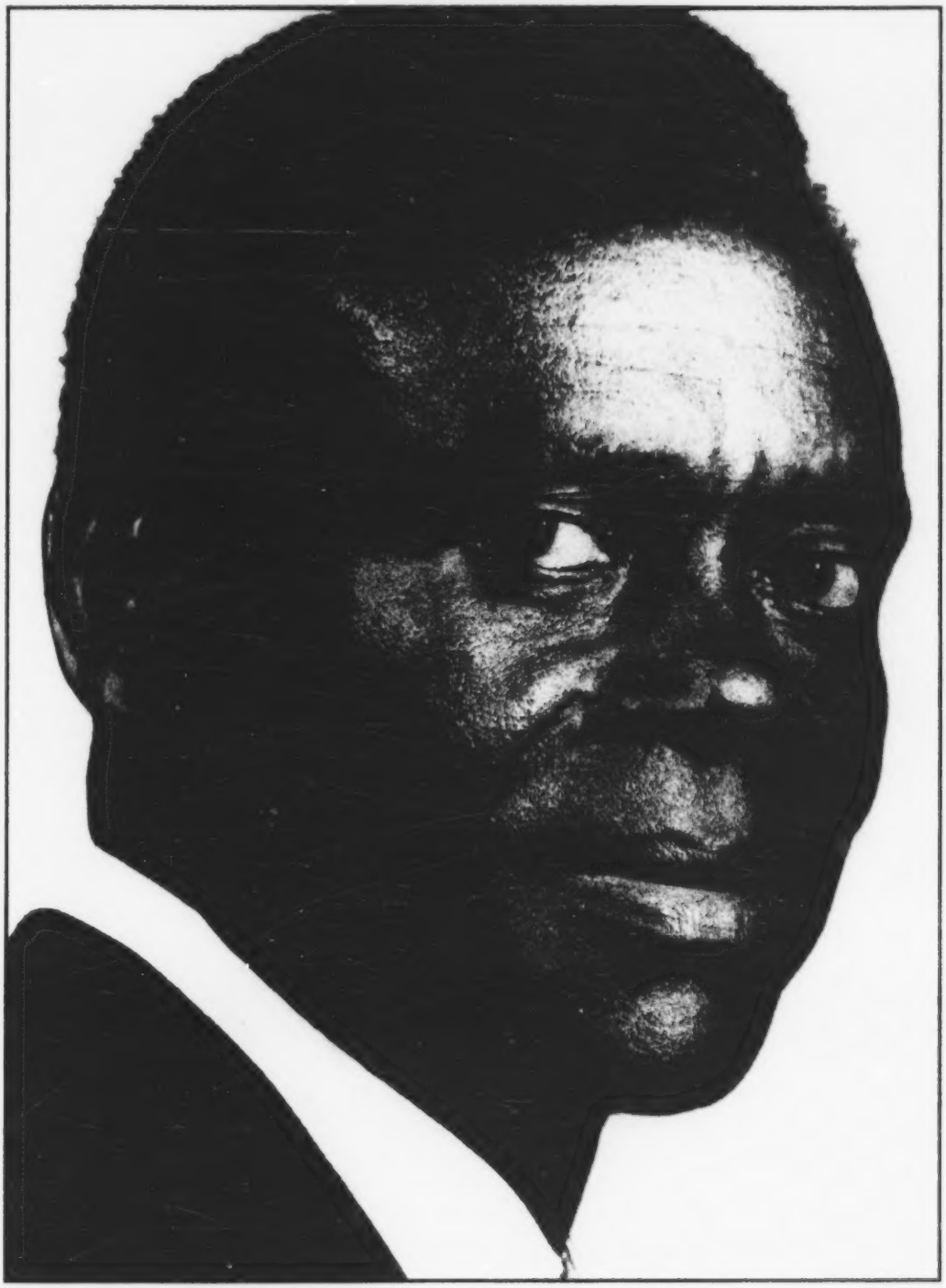
K.E. Masinga

King Edward Masinga, also known as Mangethe, was the first black radio announcer in South Africa.

He was born in 1904 at Mzumbe. His father had run away from home to become a missionary, and had settled down to live at Mzumbe to teach and preach. He was also a builder. K.E. was born there.

When he was six, K.E. started looking after his father's cattle and goats. He would start his work as a herdboy at 5 o'clock in the morning. At 8 o'clock he had his breakfast of mealiemeal porridge, and then he went to school until three in the afternoon.

When K.E. was eleven years old, his father died, and the family moved to Inanda. There he went to school at the Ohlange Institute. This school was started by the Reverend John Dube, and the pupils there were called the zebras. This is because Dube means zebra in Zulu. His mother worked as a washerwoman to pay for his schooling.



K.E. Masinga

K.E. said, "To pay for my education, my mother, who was then sixty, took in washing. She walked eight miles to the station every Tuesday, and then took the train another fifteen miles to Durban. Here she collected a big bundle of dirty clothes, and she returned the same day. Sometimes my sister and I helped her with the bundle from the station."

The clothes then had to be washed, ironed and returned on Thursdays. That meant another sixteen miles to walk and thirty miles on the train. K.E.'s mother did this every week for nine years. At the same time, she helped with the hoeing and planting. She died when she was eighty-three.

After leaving the Ohlange Institute, K.E. went to Adams College. He studied there for his matric and a teaching certificate. He worked as a teacher until 1941. He was then thirty-seven years old and dying to try something different.

Two days before Christmas, in 1941, he was walking along Aliwal Street in Durban. He passed a building that had guards outside, and he asked them the name of the building. They told him it

was a radio station, but that no blacks worked there, only whites.

K.E. went inside, and straight away he went to speak to the director. That same night, K.E. read the 7 o'clock news in Zulu for the first time. He read it every night after that.

The SABC owned only one Zulu record when he started working there. Soon K.E. started making recordings of the songs he sang when he was a herdboy. "I was always the *igosa*, the song and dance leader," he explained, "so I remembered the words and tunes well."

He formed a choir, trained them and conducted them during the recordings. He made records of hymns, Zulu songs, traditional chiefs' songs and children's songs. He even recorded the sound effects at the football games. He translated the English news into Zulu. He wrote plays based on the grannies' stories. He translated nine of Shakepeare's plays into Zulu. 'Romeo and Juliet', a famous love story, was the most popular play.

In 1957, the American Government invited K.E. to come to America for two months to study

entertainment and to talk about Zulu music. When he was in America, he said he was very worried that American music would take over in South Africa and make it difficult to keep Zulu music alive. It is interesting to see today that Zulu music is listened to in many other parts of the world, and the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo is very popular overseas.

When he was in America, a woman thought he was Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong. He had to show her his passport to prove that he wasn't the well-known trumpeter.

When he was about sixty-seven years old, he started having problems with his eyes, and he became nearly blind. He had many operations, but they did not help. He struggled to see, but he wouldn't use a white stick. "It is like walking in the dark," he said.

K.E. married eight times, and had five daughters. All his daughters stayed with him. He was strict with them when they were young. But he was also very jolly, and used to like making jokes and reciting poems to his daughters.

He was invited to many, many parties and weddings and other functions, and people often asked him to give speeches. He never prepared a speech, but just spoke straight away. K.E. liked to sing while somebody played the guitar. He also liked to dress very well. At his home in Lamontville, he had a beautiful flower garden, because gardening was one of his hobbies.

K.E. retired when he was about 65, but was re-employed again by the SABC, and retired finally when he was about 68.

He died in 1990.

Ex-herdboy guest of U.S.

KING EDWARD MASINGA, so named by his loyal, missionary father, senior Zulu announcer of the S.A.B.C. in Durban, leaves by plane for America on Monday to study entertainment and broadcasting at the invitation of the United States Government.

Thirty-five years ago, Masinga was a herdboy at Umzumbi. His mother at her husbands dying request, educated him by taking in washing.

Part of an article which appeared in the Sunday Tribune, November 17, 1957.

S.A. Zulu Announcer Returns

"Natal Mercury" Reporter

Mr. King Edward Masinga, South Africa's Zulu announcer who once composed tribal songs while herding cattle on the veld, has just returned from a two-month trip across the United States.

He gave lectures in some of the leading universities on Bantu cultures.

"Everywhere I was asked about the harmony and rhythm in Zulu music and the explanation I always gave was that it was perhaps the product of people who were socially uninhibited and who did not think it was beneath their dignity to sing and strum a guitar in the street," he said.

His tour had its humorous moments — such as in Dallas, Texas, when a woman was convinced that he was the gravel-voiced trumpeter Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, and who was surprised when she discovered that he was a real live Zulu. But he had to produce his passport to prove it to her.

This is part of an article which appeared in the Natal Mercury, January 22, 1958.

Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize

Bertha Mkhize was one of the first people to lead the struggle for women's rights in South Africa. She was also one of the first black women in Natal to have her own business.

She was born in 1889 at Embo, near Mkhomazi, and grew up in a strong Christian family. Her father was a transport driver. He travelled from Natal to Kimberley by oxwagon before there were any roads. Her father died when she was about four or five, and the family moved to Inanda. Her mother said they must move to Inanda so that the children could go to school there.

Bertha was one of the first students to go to Inanda Seminary. She also went to the Ohlange Institute which was started by the Reverend John Dube. She used to spend a lot of time there with him and his wife. "They thought I was their child, I believe," she said.

When she was ninety years old, she remembered a story about Reverend Dube.

"While I was there one day — they had asked me to come — a policeman, a white man from the police station at Inanda, came down there to Ohlange and said, 'Congratulations Mr Dube! Congratulations!'

Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize

Mr Dube said, 'What for?'
He said, 'Don't you know?'
Mr Dube said, 'What?'
He said, 'You've been elected head of the United African National Congress.'

That was the first person who told him about that!"

Bertha was a schoolteacher until she was about thirty years old. She said, "I got fed up with teaching ... always talking, talking, talking." So she wrote a letter to her brother who was living in Durban. He was one of the first African tailors in Durban. He trained for his tailoring certificate in Cape Town. At about this time, during the early 1920s, most of the skilled tailors in South Africa were men from England or from Eastern Europe.

In her letter Bertha asked her brother to teach her to be a tailor too. He agreed. It was very unusual at that time for a woman to be a tailor, and it was also very, very unusual for African women to live in town during the 1920s and 1930s. But this didn't seem to worry Bertha very much.

"I went to town and he taught me tailoring. When I first went to town, he was working under the Indians. He was cutting for the Indians in Field Street, and doing tailoring there. I worked with him there for about six months, and then he said, 'Now let us go and begin our own.' So we moved to Victoria Street, and I was working there for about 30 years."

So Bertha ran the clothing factory with her brother. But the shops in West Street would not let a factory run by blacks make their clothes, so a friend in the ICU (the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) who was called Mr Batty, and who was white, bought the material for Bertha and her brother. They made the clothes with the material, and then Mr Batty took the clothes back to the shops. He gave the money to Bertha and her brother. The people in the shops in West Street thought that Mr Batty made the clothes. He did a lot to help the black garment workers in Natal at this time.

Bertha stayed in her factory business until 1965. That was when the Durban City Council forced African businesses to move out of the area.

Bertha never married. While she was in Durban she lived in the Thokoza hostel for women. She joined the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) to fight against no notice pay, low wages and curfews. She was also on the committee of an organisation called the African Women's Association.

In 1925 the African Women's Association arranged a march through Durban. The women marched because the Durban City Council said that African women must not go to Durban just when they want to. If a woman wanted to go to Durban, she had to first go to a magistrate who might be a long way away. Then the magistrate had to write to Durban to give the reasons for her visit, and to ask for permission. Then the woman had to wait for Durban to write back. "And of course, everyone would take their time — the magistrate and Durban," said Bertha.

So the African Women's Association arranged a march, and about 500 women marched through the streets of Durban.

"I think there were about 500 of us," said Bertha, "and we went to West Street. And all the white

people in West Street came out to see what was happening. We went to the Native Commissioner's office, and when we came there we just sat. It was about 1 o'clock, and they had all gone to dinner. We just all sat down. I never saw women so quiet. When they all came back at 2 o'clock, the Native Commissioner thought, 'What are the women doing here?' "

At last he came down to speak to them. Bertha had to speak, so she told the Commissioner the trouble this would make for the women. "I don't know how much I talked," she said. But after she finished, the Commissioner said, "I understand what you are talking about, and now, from today onwards, no woman shall carry a pass." And no woman carried a pass until the government made black women carry the dompas thirty years later.

"I didn't want a pass," she said years later. "Nothing wrong with the pass. It's the way it's done for Africans. If you have a pass, if anything happens to you, you are known — where you come from, who you are and all that. But when you haven't done anything, when you are just a woman in the street and someone says, 'Show me your pass!' why should you? If you find me

fighting somebody, or stealing, or doing anything wrong, ask me for my pass; not just when I'm walking."

In 1956, when she was president of the ANC's Women's League, she was arrested in the middle of the night. The policemen said it was for treason. It was because she was saying that blacks and whites must be equal, and that it was wrong to force blacks to carry passes. "Well," she said to the policemen, "do come in. Because you say I am going with you, while you are searching, I'm going to take a bath."

After they searched her house, the police took her to Smith Street Police Station. There were about thirty other people there who they had also arrested. Early in the morning the police took them all to the airport to fly to Johannesburg. It was Bertha's first time in an aeroplane. "Nobody was nervous, there was nothing to be nervous about. I thought I was going to be nervous, but no. It was even better than the car that runs on the road," she said.

The court case lasted four years, and in the end they were all found 'not guilty'.

While Bertha was working in Durban she helped to start many different projects to help women, such as creches, sewing groups and literacy classes.

One day she met a young boy called Malkop, the son of a friend of hers. He told her about the Bahai religion which says that all people are equal — it doesn't matter whether they are black or white, Hindu or Muslim, Catholic or Anglican or Jewish. Everybody shares the same God. She did a lot of work for the Bahais. She set up centres all over Zululand and translated their books into Zulu.

After the Durban City Council closed down African businesses in Durban in 1965, she moved back to Inanda. She thought of trying to build a creche in Inanda. "So," she said, "when I came home I thought — children now cannot go to school until they are seven years old and used to roaming about. They will not like school any more, they will hate school. So I thought we'll try to build a creche here."

So Bertha Mkhize and Mrs Gumede started collecting money from people in the area. As soon as they'd collected 70 pounds, they started the

creche in the Inanda Centenary Hall. She also collected money from whites she knew from meetings in Durban. She went to Killie Campbell, who was born at Inanda, and she and her sister gave money every month until they died.

Bertha Mkhize died in 1981 at Inanda when she was ninety-two years old. Before she died, she was trying very hard to start an old age home in Inanda. She tried to help old people as well as children.

Until the end of her life, Bertha believed that it is important for people to talk.

"Talk, just talk. Talk again until things come out right. Because I believe there will be a time when everything **will** come together, and whether you are black or white or yellow or brown doesn't matter, as long as you are made by God."

Simon Mkhize

Simon Mkhize is a sportsman. He was the first black runner to get a green number for running the Comrades Marathon ten times. The Comrades Marathon is a race which is eighty kilometres long, and it is one of the most difficult races in the world to run. If a runner manages to finish it ten times in less than eleven hours, he or she is given a green number. This is a great honour.

But Simon had not only run the race ten times when he got his green number. He had run it sixteen times. Blacks were only allowed to run officially in 1975. Before 1975 Simon ran the race six times. But he never got a medal at the end of those races, because he was not an official runner. He was not white.

In 1973 a white runner, John Morrison, collected medals from other whites and gave them to the black runners to protest against the 'whites only' rule. They wanted to show the organisers that they were very unhappy about the 'whites only' rule. Now Simon has run the Comrades Marathon

fourteen times officially, and twenty times altogether, and he has got five silver medals and nine bronze medals. His best time is six and a half hours.

Simon was born on the 4th of March 1942 near Howick, and he has five sisters and three brothers. His father was a farmer. When Simon was about twelve years old, the family moved to Underberg. Simon worked on a farm which belonged to a white farmer, and he earned about fifteen shillings a month. He also spent a lot of time playing with the son of the farmer. Together they rode horses and swam in the rivers.

He started running when he was twenty-eight. At that time he was working at Scottish Cables in Pietermaritzburg. A friend made a bet with Simon that he could beat him in a race. So Simon started training for this race with his friend. The friend noticed that Simon could run quite fast, and decided not to race him.

Then, another friend said he could beat him with his bicycle. They made a R3.00 bet. So his friend rode his bicycle from Scottish Cables to Mbali, and Simon ran. But Simon took shortcuts through

the bush, and his friend had to stick to the road. Simon won the race, but he gave his friend R1.00 back, because he used shortcuts.

After this race, Simon found out that he couldn't stop running. He just liked it so much. Another runner, Theo Miller, saw him running one day, and he became Simon's trainer. So Simon started entering races, and winnning them. The first race he ran in he won, and he won the next race too. Then he entered a race which was fifteen miles long — from Albert Falls to Northdale Stadium in Pietermaritzburg. He won that race three times in a row. He laughed and said, "Every year I had to bring the trophy and take it home, bring the trophy and take it home, bring the trophy and take it home."

His nickname became Uhlanya, which means madman. People would shout this at him as he ran past — "Uhlanya!"

He made friends through running, and they said he must run the 'Comrades'. So he ran it, but he didn't know it was such a long race. He was used to short races. He had to get food and drink from other runners, because he didn't take his own.

The people on the side of the road were very pleased to see Simon and the other black runners running in the race, and cheered them on. They knew they weren't official runners, and that they wouldn't get medals at the end of the race. There were also lots of posters saying, "Open Comrades to Blacks now."

Simon also found out that he liked other sports. Greg Bennet, a canoeist, met Simon. "He pushed me to canoe," said Simon. "I said I can't." He said, "Come on," and took Simon to Albert Falls Dam. That was a Saturday, and it was Simon's first time in a canoe. On Sunday he had to be in a race. He had to sit with another person in a canoe, and he had to try very hard not to fall over, because a canoe is such a long, narrow boat.

Now he has been in the 'Dusi' canoe race seven times. He was the first black person to take part in this race. You have to paddle a canoe all the way from Pietermaritzburg, down the Msunduze River, to Durban. It takes about three days to get to Durban. To get energy for this race Simon eats samp, maas and beans. He also eats a mixture of Pronutro (he calls it sawdust), raw egg and orange juice.

Simon Mkhize and John Morrison look at all Simon's medals and badges. He still has the silver medal which John gave him nearly twenty years ago.

Simon holding the paddle he uses for canoeing

But Simon didn't stop there. He has also tried mountain-climbing using ropes, and going down the Mkhomazi River in a small rubber boat. This is called rafting, and it is his favourite sport at the moment. He wants to see more black canoeists and rafters. "You must know how to pull water," he says. "But it is very important to know how to swim if you do these sports, and it is difficult for black children to learn how to swim if there are no swimming pools in the townships."

Simon has one son called David. David has also run the 'Comrades', and next year father and son will run against each other. Simon says he will only give up running when his grandchild is old enough to say to his friends, "You see that man running there? That is my grandfather!"

Simon has his own business in Pietermaritzburg repairing chainsaws. His dream is to go back to farming in the Boston area. He already owns a few cows, and he looks forward to the day when he can get some land.

Whites give medals to Black Comrades

Daily News Reporter

THE FIRST TWO African runners to complete the Comrades Marathon yesterday received a gold and silver medal from former Comrades runners.

Zwelitsha Gono, a 21 year-old student teacher from the Indaleni Art School at Richmond, who was the first unofficial runner to cross the finishing line received the gold medal, while Simon Mkhize got the silver medal.

Mr John Morrison, a Comrades veteran from Pietermaritzburg who presented the medals to the non-white athletes, said yesterday that he had collected seven silver medals and a gold from former Comrades runners.

Mr Morrison said that he was sick of the attitude of the organisers in keeping non-Whites out of the Comrades as official runners.

Mr Morrison attacked the chairman of the Comrades Marathon Committee, Mr A.S. Bendzulia, for his attitude toward the non-White runners.

"How can he say that it is only a club event when athletes from New Zealand and England have taken part in the race?

"The marathon is one of the greatest road races in the world, and I think it is a disgrace that non-Whites are not regarded as official participants," he said.

This article, together with a picture of Mkhize and Gono, appeared in the Daily News, June 2, 1973.

BLACKS ARE IN THE BIG EVENT

Staff Reporter

ALTHOUGH the Comrades Marathon is officially an "all-White" race, there have been unofficial entries from two Black runners who both ran in last year's race.

Simon Mkhize (32), who is a gardener at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, will be running for the fifth time, but this time wearing university colours.

Last week Mkhize came seventh in the university's 20km race in a time of 1 hour, 18 minutes, 48 seconds, as well as in the 56km race at Botha's Hill recently. He has been training for the big race with Collegian Harriers and Varsity runners.

A 22 year-old student teacher from the Ndaleni Art School at Richmond, Zwelitsha Gono, was the first unofficial runner to cross the finishing line last year.

Yesterday he said he had not been training very hard but was still going to run "as the up-run is in my favour because I like the steep roads".

Both Mkhize and Gono finished last year's Comrades Marathon in just under seven hours.

This article appeared in the Natal Witness, May 30, 1975.

THE NEW READERS PROJECT

The New Readers Project of the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Durban develops and supports adult literacy and basic English Second Language skills by producing books in simple language for the entertainment and education of adults. Each of the books has been evaluated and modified by potential readers.

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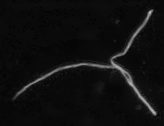
South Africa

Against the Wind tells the stories of five remarkable South Africans: Simon Mkhize who, year after year, ran the Comrades Marathon unofficially, ignoring its racial bans; Magema M. Fuze, who was the first black South African to publish a book in Zulu; Sibusisiwe Violet Makhanya, who was the first black woman to become a qualified social worker; K.E. Masinga, who became the first black radio announcer and Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize, who was one of the first people to champion women's rights in South Africa, as well as being one of the first black women in Natal to have her own business.



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